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AUTHOR Gordon, Roosevelt, Jr.
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ABSTRACT

A tutoring and advisement model designed to enhance the academic achievement and retention of academically underprepared college students is described, along with results of assessing student outreach efforts, participation of students in services, and outcomes. A special objective of the program was to assist black college students. A total of 115 Northeastern Illinois University undergraduate students participated in the Department of Special Programs in the fall 1986 term. Twenty-two of these students who received a GPA of below "C" were selected to participate in a tutoring and advisement program. Fifteen of these students completed the Winter 1987 term, during which time 6 letters were sent to them urging participation in systematic advisement and tutoring services. It was found that the students did not follow any one prescribed schedule for tutoring or advisement. It is suggested that a method be developed to recruit students to the tutoring and advisement services. (SW)

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A Retention and Achievement Program for Non-Traditional Black Students.

Roosevelt Gordon Jr. A Mandatory Tutoring and Advisement Program (MTAP).

Roosevelt Gordon Jr.
Assistant Professor of Student Affairs
Coordinator of Project Success
Northeastern Illinois University
5500 N. St. Louis at Bryn-mawr
Chicago, Illinois 60625

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The complex ways in which people learn and ultimately persists while attending institutions of higher education is not easily understood or formulated. Non-traditional Black students on predominantly White campuses have as the research indicates, particular needs which must be meet in order to enhance their achievement and persistence on college campuses. As a result, this article will describe a particular teaching assistant model, which attempts to enhance the academic achievement abilities of academically underprepared students, and ultimately increase their retention/persistence on college campuses. This method has the flexibility of easy manipulative processes, which can be altered for students with severe academic deficiencies as well as for those who need to make lesser academic adjustments. The investigator will discuss the research done with the use of this tutoring and advisement model; present the findings and discuss its application and limitations.

According to Collison (1987a and 1987b) and Hirschorn (1987) predominantly White private institutions continue to develop competitive recruitment

schemes in order to attract the most competent of minority students. Collison (1987a) feels compelled that the recruitment of Black students continue at a fever pitch to respond to reports such as those by the American Council on Education, which indicated that Black student college enrollment had dropped from 9.4 percent to 8.8 percent in 1984. Cohen (1984) feels that the 1980's should mark the beginning of programs and strategies that not only enhance the recruitment of Black students, but their retention as well. Cohen (1984) has indicated that the right to fail era of the 1960's and 1970's should be laid to rest as another experiment in education that proved baseless. State legislators and the public must have answers to their questions concerning accountability factors, such as: rates of student transfer, graduation, employment and program completion. This was the primary reason for institutions of higher education to implement mandatory testing and academic course placement programs (Cohen, 1984). Although mandatory testing and placement is only one of the strategies that have been used by colleges in an effort to retain their students. Cohen indicates that "other activities include orientation sessions, the provision of tutors, integrated support services, and the introduction of special activities within classes,

as well as the provision of numerous levels of classes scaled according to student ability" (p. 5). Nevertheless, Anderson (1978), Turner (1980) and et al, remind us that with all these retention programs to assist students with skill deficiencies, those students who need support services the most tend to request them least. Therefore, Clagett (1982) has suggested a mandatory orientation course to be planned and executed by counselors or non-instructional personnel for students with academic skill deficiencies. Cohen (1984) suggests the use of mandatory course placement into classes where non-traditional students have a chance for success. In studies by Bray (1981), Cox (1981), Epstein (1979), Knoell (1981) and Pounds (1980), all show significant gains in retention and grade point average data for those students who were tested and placed in courses meeting their skill needs. Out of 106 California community colleges surveyed, 99 responded that during 1982-1983 only 20 percent required general assessment for matriculation. Rounds and Anderson (1984) expects the above percentage to increase as a result of legislative interest in higher education. If we agree with Haettenschwiller (1971), that the unknown quality of college life provides the basis for many student problems. If this is the case, the traditional

counseling system in higher education in order to serve the disadvantaged student, must develop a contemporary integrative approach to counseling. Consequently, Minatoya and Sedlacek (1983) have recognized that the diagnosis and remediation of students problems are not enough; preventive and developmental interventions are also necessary. Furthermore, the research by Ponterotto, Anderson, and Grieger (1986), found that Black students show a preference for Black counselors and will stay away from counseling centers because they do not expect White counselors to readily understand their problems. Nevertheless, if a counseling center is available and staffed by Blacks, Ponterotto, Anderson and Grieger (1986) suggest that it must provide extended outreach to Black students, to make sure that all students are aware that such services exist. Therefore, advicement/counseling of non-traditional Black students should be mandatory to help insure this outreach component.

To get the most out of a students' academic achievement, Heath (1985) has suggested individual peer-tutoring supplemented with every other week peer-run group reviews. Cross (1976) suggests the use of "buddy tutoring." "If you tutor me in medieval history, I'll tutor you in auto repair." Webb (1983)

indicates that certain general properties of a mixture of small tutorial groups (with no more than four students) and individual tutorials have been identified as being beneficial or good when you have: a) all members participating, b) students arguing among themselves and c) all students asking questions. Due to the fact that the greatest attrition seems to occur during the first few weeks of the term, it is important for those supplemental tutorial and course-related activities begin early. Rounds (1984), Martin and Blanc (1981) described institutional practices centering on early intervention and supplemental instruction, in which high-risk courses rather than high-risk students were identified. The idea of involving students early in these supplemental tutorial and course-related activities, is what Bessire (1982) in his California State-Wide Longitudinal Study attributed to the increase from four percent of the students sampled expressing a need for tutorial services in their first year, to over twenty percent by their third year. Cohen (1984) indicates that programs which offer support services should be integrative in their pedagogical approach. In which students are blocked into courses in common, and "the English instructors use materials from the content courses as the basis for writing assignments while the

content course instructors insist that students write papers" (Cohen, 1984, p. 7). However, because most tutorial programs that exist in postsecondary institutions depend on the student to take the initiative to become involved with the tutoring services. The institution therefore, requires that students must sign contracts as part of their acceptance of admissions into the university or support program, indicating that they will use the available academic support services that are provided. This is one major reason why this researcher feels that a mandatory program of tutoring and advisement is necessary.

In terms of this research, the term retention will be defined according to Turner (1980), who defines retention conceptually as it refers to the students matriculation and completion of an academic program in a college or university. In terms of academic preparation, Green (1969) in an examination of the factors related to successful matriculation of Black students in White schools, reports evidence that SAT-type scores are equally good predictors of performance for Black and White students but that attitudinal and personality factors play a more crucial role in Black students performance. Consequently, Green (1969) confirms the position of this research, when he states that effective

tutorial and counseling programs can address both the academic and psychosocial problems and thereby help high-risk students perform successfully.

From the findings on tutoring and counseling Black students, it must appear obvious as to why this research is demanding that both these very important functions become mandatory in programs and universities that are serving non-traditional students. This research article will highlight the functions of a "Mandatory Tutoring and Advisement Program" (MTAP), that is comprehensive, integrative and ideally should include student, advisor, tutor, teacher, and parents. The program functions as a systematic programmatized series of processes, in which data is collected on attempted student outreach, actual student utilization of program services, as well as the reporting of descriptive and inferential statistics to explain and evaluate students outcomes and program effect. Accordingly, this investigator feels that in regards to the research in these areas, programs and universities should take the initiative in making tutoring and counseling mandatory, in order to insure student development, retention, and obtaining successful grade point averages.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of 115 undergraduate students enrolled at Northeastern Illinois University in the Department of Special Programs, Project Success during the Fall 1986 term. At the completion of their Fall 1986 term, twenty-two of the students had received a grade point average of below "C" (less than 3.00 on a five point scale). In the beginning of the Winter 1987 term, these twenty-two Black students were selected because of their grade point averages to participate in the Mandatory Tutoring and Advisement Program.

Procedure

The twenty-two students were formally contacted six times during the Winter 1987 term. The personal contacts were created by mailing five letters/surveys and one phone communication. The first letter was formal; individually addressing each student by name. The letter warned the student about having a cumulative grade point average of below "C" and the possibility of being dropped from the university due to "poor scholarship." The letter was sent January 12, 1987, three days after classes began for the Winter 1987 term. The letter concludes with a directive that the student must attend tutoring at least one hour a week for each

course registered in General Education, English Language, Reading, or Mathematics. The letter also strongly recommended that the student see his/her advisor for future course selection and scheduled tutoring. The letter was accompanied by the university's Tutorial Center brochure, which describes the services of the Tutorial Center, and a Tutorial Request Form, used for registering students for tutoring and notifying academic advisors of their students program participation.

A week after the introductory letter was sent, a follow-up letter was sent (January 22, 1987). This second letter was less formal, referring to the students as "dear student." The letter reinformed the students that because of their below "C" grade point average, they must make an appointment with their academic advisor so that they understand the programmatic advisement and tutorial process. The letter required that the student respond to several survey questions regarding attendance at tutoring sessions and meetings with their academic advisors as indicated in the introductory letter. The letter was to be returned by the student, to their advisor, and kept by the advisor as part of an advisement record.

Three weeks after the follow-up letter was sent, a

third letter/survey was sent, informing students that midterm examinations were approaching and would begin during the week of February 16, 1987; therefore, this third letter was mailed on February 9, 1987. The letter began by asking the students how they felt they were doing academically this term (excellent, good, fair, or poor). Furthermore, the letter contained survey questions asking the students to respond in the affirmative or negative as to whether they were attending tutoring; how often were they seeing their advisors and tutors, and during what times. The letter concluded by giving the students a reason as to why these questions were being asked and why their responses were important; wished them good luck with their midterms, and requested the return of the survey to their advisors.

Two weeks after the third letter was mailed, each student received a phone call (February 23, 1987) asking them how they thought they had done after completing midterm exams. Once again, the phone conversation was to reinforce the use of tutorial services and academic advisement. During February 23, 1987 through March 10, 1987, each students' class instructor was asked to complete an "Academic Progress Report" indicating how each student was performing academically after midterms.

On March 12, 1987 students received a very informal letter beginning with "hello." The letter contained several questions asking the students about tutoring, and whether or not they were participating. The letter also contained information informing students that their professors had been contacted and inquires had been made regarding their midterm class performance. The students received the March 12, 1987 letter, with a copy of each of their professors "Academic Progress Reports" evaluating each students midterm performance. The March 12th letter also remined students who received negative progress reports from their instructors that, the last day to drop classes was March 20, 1987. Furthermore, the letter required that the students answer the following survey questions: "What was their tutoring schedule"? "What was their tutor/s name"? "In what subject/s were they being tutored"? The letter also asked the students to evaluate their tutor (excellent, good, fair, or poor), and their tutorial site (excellent, good, fair, or poor). The letter concludes with an urgent appeal to begin to prepare for class finals and to return the letter to their advisor with the questions answered.

The March 23, 1987 letter indicated to the students

that this would be the last correspondence that they would receive as they prepared for class final examinations. The March 23rd. letter informed students that March 20, 1987 had passed (the last day to drop classes), and final exams would be from April 13, 1987 through April 17, 1987. As a result, the March 23rd. letter also asked the students to comment on the following areas: "How were they preparing for finals"? "What more could the Department of Special Programs Project Success do to assist them"? "How has this process of systematic advisement and tutoring been helpful to them"? "If necessary, how can this systematic program of advisement and tutoring be improved"? The letter concluded with "good luck" during final exams, and asked that the student return the letter with comments to their advisor.

TABLE I
Department of Special Programs
Project Success Fall of 1986
Freshmen Below "C" Average

Term Completed	No. of Students	$\bar{X}$CGPA	S.D.	df	T-Value
Fall 1986	22	2.37	.06		
Winter 1987	15	2.38	.37	14	5.61

p>.1; p>.05; p>.01; p>.001

Results

Results were based on 22 non-traditional undergraduate

Black students, who entered Northeastern Illinois University during the Fall 1986 term through a provisional admissions program known as Project Success. After the completion of their first term, those 22 students had cumulative grade point averages (CGPA's) below a "C" and was therefore selected to participate in a mandatory tutoring and advisement program. At the beginning of their second term (Winter 1987) five students did not return; during the second term, two more students had withdrawn from the university, leaving a total of 15 students who had completed the Winter 1987 semester.

The statistical findings indicated that the "T-Test" for nonindependent samples showed there was no difference between the two groups of scores (pre and post treatment). The researcher therefore accepts the null hypothesis at the .1, .05, .01, and .001 levels of significants, signifying no difference between the two groups of cumulative grade point averages. The statistical results become quit obvious when noticing the closeness of the two sets of mean CGPA scores, and the small amount of varience within each set of group scores as indicated by their standard deviation scores. (Table I.) One important limitation that effects this study is its lack of a control group. Consequently, if other researchers are interested in repeating this study, the use of a control group will help determine more effectively the

impact of the treatment.

Discussion

The significance of this study, was that it not only documented the behavior of the 22 Black students who were told to attend tutoring, but it attempted to modify adult behavior in a systematic scientific manner. In which documentation was maintained in sequences, in order to determine if direct supervised advisement and tutoring if followed according to the guidelines of the MTA Program, could enhance a students' GPA. The information collected during this research project indicated that change or differences in GPA scores before and after treatment were not likely to occure, because of the students misuse and avoidance of the systematized tutoring and advisement program. The students did not follow any one prescribed schedule for tutoring or advisement, proving that before tutoring and advisement can impact on the academic behavior of students, a method must first be developed to get students to willfully volunteer in the tutoring and advisement process. It is this process of outreach that Anderson (1978), Turner (1980), Bessive (1982) et al, specify that must be channelled into programs which must take the initiative in promoting and providing services to those students who generally will not seek nor ask for such support services. However, this researcher has high hopes

for the use of this tutoring and advisement model, as continued longitudinal studies may prove important in terms of identifying and isolating those extraneous variables, such as: maturity, Hawthorne and serendipity effects that might impact on retention and achievement results.

Hopefully, this research can be used as a guide to further assist those who are primarily working with a Black non-traditional student population in a postsecondary institution. Consequently, the MTAP model is one attempt to assist primarily Black students to remain in college and achieve scholastically. Nevertheless, we are reminded by Turner (1980), that regardless of all the assistance from individuals, programs, and institutions, "minority students must begin to realize that if they are to reap the benefits of a higher education in the 1980's, they will have to become much more responsible and accountable for their own education. The burden of success ultimately rests on their shoulders" (p. 213).

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